



Report to the Auburn City Council

Action Item
Agenda Item No. 1.1

City Manager Approval
[Signature]

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Michael Garlock, Sergeant Auburn Police Department
Date: September 12, 2011
Subject: Police Utility Vests

THE ISSUE:

The Auburn Police Department would like to have an optional method for their officers to carry their police equipment. Currently the officers carry their equipment such as their firearm, spare bullets contained in magazines, flashlight, collapsible baton, Taser, handcuffs, pepper spray, and portable radio on a belt, which obviously is worn around their waist. The department would like to allow the officers, if they choose to do so, to wear a vest that would hold all of their equipment except their firearm that would still be worn on a belt.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

The department proposes that the City of Auburn allow the officers to choose to wear a vest as an option to carry their police equipment.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND:

The average weight of the police equipment contained on a police belt is approximately 20 pounds. When the equipment is worn on the belt, the officer's hips and lower back have to support the weight. Whereas if the equipment is worn on a vest, the weight is distributed over a wider area and the weight is supported by the officer's shoulders, which should minimize lower back issues.

In September and October of 2010, the Auburn Police Department started working on testing these types of vests. Officers went to the Downtown and Old Town Business Associations and presented the idea to them. The associations were shown the vests and it was explained to them what the benefits of wearing a vest would be. None of the associations expressed any concerns or displeasure about the officers wearing the vests. The associations supported the vest concept especially if it would assist the officers in any way and protect them from any injuries.

Three Auburn officers have worn the vests on patrol in public on both dayshifts and graveyard shifts during trial periods ranging from 30-120 days. No complaints have been received by the Chief of Police from the public regarding the wear of the vests.

I contacted Auburn's insurance group, York Insurance Services Group and received the following information from Jack Kastorff, CSP, PE, ARM, ALCM Risk Control Manager with York Insurance Services Group, Inc. Mr. Kastorff provided me with a spreadsheet detailing some of the officers' claims some of which were related to back injuries. He also said the analysis of the spreadsheet yielded the following information.

According to Kastorff, the spreadsheet contained 5 years of losses from all NCCSIF cities. There were 465 claims, for almost ten million dollars, averaging just over \$21,000 per claim. Including 4850 time brings the total to almost \$11.5 million, and the average to \$24,532.

The colors of the vests will not be black, as it has been expressed to the Chief of Police that black looks too militaristic. The vests instead will be navy blue, which will match the current color of the Auburn Police Department's uniforms.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

The City of Auburn will have no expenses regarding the purchase of the vests, as each officer who decides to wear one of these vests will have to purchase it with his or her own money just as they currently do with their utility belts. As I have stated the vests are optional, and not every officer would have to wear one if they chose not to. The approximate cost of a vest is \$250.

There is a positive impact for the city in that there could be a reduction in officer work related back injuries that would reduce worker's compensation claims. A York Insurance Service Group employee, Jack Kastorff, explained in an email that an officer worker's comp claim averages a cost of 24,532.00.

Conclusion:

This report is for information only. However, council input is solicited prior to implementation of this uniform option.